

**Chesapeake Bay Focused Environmental Management System**  
EPA Region 3 - Philadelphia

**Geographic location or area of activity:** Chesapeake Bay Watershed

**Description of activity:** The Regional Federal Facilities Program implemented, in conjunction with the Chesapeake Bay Program and assistance from the Federal Facilities Enforcement Office - OECA, an Environmental Management System (EMS) focused on the Chesapeake Bay (the Bay). The main environmental problems affecting the Chesapeake Bay's water-quality conditions are excessive discharges of nutrients (nitrogen and phosphorus) and sediments. Sediment and pollution downstream into the Chesapeake Bay reduce native underwater grasses, reef acreage and the population of oysters. Higher nutrient levels lead to algal blooms, which can decrease the amount of dissolved oxygen and result in fish kills. The algal blooms, along with increased amounts of sediment, can cause a decrease in the light needed by the underwater grasses. The grasses are an important habitat for crabs and food for waterfowl.

The Program had the challenge to find the best compliance assistance tool to promote reductions in those pollutants affecting the Bay; a 2-day training session was designed to address the pollutant with the use of systematic system as EMS. A contractor conducted two sessions during fiscal year 2007, and will conduct two more sessions during fiscal year 2008.

This EMS training provided the participants an overview of the EMS (ISO 14001) elements, the international consensus standard for environmental management systems. The training described possible approaches to designing elements so that watershed priorities are reflected in EMS activities and environmental performance-improvement goals. Also, the participants understood the potential that the EMS approach has to focus resources on high-priority local environmental issues such as protection of a valuable watershed. Specific issues addressed in the training were nutrients, phosphates, TSS and stormwater.

More than twenty facilities have received this training and based on the post training evaluations, the participants had an increased understanding of EMS and were ready to share and apply what they learned. Post evaluations will be conducted to measure the impact of this training and to record any reduction in those pollutants affecting the Bay.

**Interagency partners:** Chesapeake Bay Program, Federal Facilities Enforcement Office – OECA.